

House Bill 2
General Appropriations Act
Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
NP 3501 – Communications IT RST

Proponent Testimony by Jeff Brandt, Deputy Chief Information Officer (CIO)
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Department of Administration
444-3988

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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, for the record my name is Jeff Brandt. I am the Deputy Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD), within the Department of Administration.

My testimony is related to DNRC's New Proposal 3501 (Radio Communications IT RST).

ITSD is the agency within State government that manages the Interoperability Montana (IM) project, a project to deploy a state-wide replacement for Montana's aging public safety radio communications system. This is a very large and complex project and will take years to complete. Efforts to complete this project have accelerated in recent years due to the availability of federal, state, and local funding, an aging radio infrastructure that gets increasingly difficult and expensive to maintain, and federal mandates to convert to radio equipment that meets federal standards by the deadline of 2013. For those of you that are more technically inclined, the current systems that use "wideband" radios must be replaced with new digital radios that are "narrowband" and comply with a federal standard known as "P25".

Our office, working with several State agencies that use radios to carry out their mission, recently completed a study or "needs assessment". This study identified the needs of state agencies as the Interoperability Montana project upgrades the underlying infrastructure of towers and radio equipment, and as all agencies approach the federal deadline of 2013.

With the purchase of new radio equipment that is compatible with the Interoperability Montana radio Project, DNRC will be taking an important step towards participating in the new system.

I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.